

Message Text

SECRET

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9482
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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, BG,IFS, IN

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR TRAINING FOR FORMER RAKKHI BAHINI CHIEF

1. FOREIGN SECRETARY TABARAK HUSSAIN CALLED ME IN JANUARY 19 TO SAY THAT HE WISHED TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING REQUEST ON A HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL BASIS. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE FORMER HEAD OF THE JATIYO RAKKHI BAHINI (JRB), A.N.M. NURUZZAMAN, HAD BEEN ONE OF THOSE WHO HAD TAKEN SANCTUARY IN INDIA FOLLOWING RECENT EVENTS AND WAS BELIEVED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE TRAINING OF FORCES FOR AN INVASION OF BANGLADESH. IMPRESSED, HOWEVER, BY THE PROGRESS BEING MADE BY THE NEW GOVERNMENT HERE, NURUZZAMAN HAD NOW INDICATED HIS READINESS TO LEAVE INDIA. FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT STRONGLY WISHED THIS TO HAPPEN BUT IT WAS NOT YET POSSIBLE TO HAVE HIM RETURN TO BANGLADESH. THEY WOULD THEREFORE LIKE US, HE SAID, TO ARRANGE FOR SOME TRAINING FOR HIM IN THE UNITED STATES FOR A YEAR'S TIME, AFTER WHICH HE COULD BE BROUGHT BACK TO BANGLADESH FOR SERVICE IN SOME CONSULAR OR DIPLOMATIC POSITION. THE SUGGESTION HAD ALSO BEEN MADE THAT HE MIGHT BE SENT TO ENGLAND BUT THEY HAD DECIDED THIS WAS NOT A GOOD IDEA (AN IMPLICIT REFERENCE TO THE LARGE BANGALEE COMMUNITY THERE, SOME OF IT DISSIDENT).

2. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SEEMED SURPRISINGLY VAGUE IN ANSWERING MY QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT PRECISELY THEY EXPECTED

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OF US AND WHAT KIND OF TRAINING THEY HAD IN MIND FOR

NURUZZAMAN AND I FINALLY CONCLUDED THAT, WITHOUT WISHING TO SAY SO, HE WAS SUPPOSING THAT THE CIA COULD TAKE NURUZZAMAN UNDER THEIR WING FOR A YEAR AND MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIS STUDY AT SOME AMERICAN UNIVERSITY. WHEN I FIRST INQUIRED WHETHER THEY HAD POLICE TRAINING IN MIND FOR HIM, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID NO, THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO SEND HIM TO POST-GRADUATE WORK AT SOME AMERICAN UNIVERSITY SO THAT THE TRAINING WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR A LATER RETURN TO DIPLOMATIC OR CONSULAR SERVICE. HOWEVER, WHEN I MENTIONED THE FOREIGN SERVICE SCHOOLS AT GEORGETOWN AND PRINCETON THE FOREIGN SECRETARY THOUGHT THESE SCHOOLS MIGHT BE A LITTLE BEYOND NURUZZAMAN'S DEPTH. HE SAID THERE MUST BE SOME OTHER SCHOOL WHICH WOULD BE BETTER FOR THE PURPOSE.

3. I TOLD TABARAK HUSAIN I WOULD CONVEY HIS REQUEST BUT THAT I HAD THE IMPRESSION HE UNDERESTIMATED THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THIS WOULD POSE FOR US. IN THE FIRST PLACE, I WAS NOT SURE HOW WE COULD MANAGE SUCH ARRANGEMENTS (TABARAK SAID HE ASSUMED THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE COULD SIMPLY TURN THE MATTER OVER TO ANOTHER "AGENCY" OR INSTITUTION); SECONDLY, NURUZZAMAN MIGHT BE REGARDED BY SOME AS A CONTROVERSIAL FIGURE AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S INVOLVEMENT IN ANY ARRANGEMENTS WHEREBY HE WERE WITHDRAWN FROM INDIA AND SENT TO SCHOOL IN THE UNITED STATES MIGHT BE POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING, PARTICULARLY IN INDIA. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID THEY DID NOT WISH TO PUT US IN THAT POSITION, BUT HE FELT SURE IT COULD BE HANDLED IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT WOULD BE LIKE ANY OTHER CASE OF A STUDENT ENTERING THE UNITED STATES FOR UNIVERSITY WORK. WHEN I ASKED ABOUT NURUZZAMAN'S EXPENSES, HE SAID THAT IF WE WERE UNABLE TO TAKE CARE OF THEM, THEY WOULD.

4. I TOLD THE FOREIGN SECRETARY THAT I WOULD NEED NURUZZAMAN'S CURRICULUM VITAE IN ORDER TO CONVEY THIS REQUEST AND HE SAID HE WOULD GET IT FOR ME. IT WILL BE TRANSMITTED WHEN RECEIVED.

5. COMMENT: THE ADVANTAGE TO THE BDG OF ENABLING NURUZZAMAN TO LEAVE INDIA IS EVIDENT -- AND BY EXTENSION WOULD SEEM IN OUR INTEREST AS WELL -- AND I ACCEPT THE
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FOREIGN SECRETARY'S ARGUMENT THAT IT MAY BE POLITICALLY INFEASIBLE TO HAVE HIM RETURN TO BANGLADESH FOR THE TIME BEING. I ASSUME, HOWEVER, THAT THE POTENTIAL EMBARRASSMENT IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA OVERRIDES ANY OTHER CONSIDERATION FOR US, ALTHOUGH NEW DELHI IS BEST ABLE TO JUDGE THIS CONSIDERATION AND MAY WISH TO COMMENT.

6. IF IN THE END WE WERE TO AGREE TO ASSIST, I THINK

WE SHOULD LIMIT OUR OWN ROLE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. I
WOULD SUPPOSE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT WE SHOULD LEAVE IT TO
BDG TO ARRANGE NURUZZAMAN'S DEPARTURE FROM INDIA AND THAT
IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE FOR BDG TO ASSUME ALL RESPONSIBILITY
FOR THE FORMER JRB HEAD'S EXPENSES.

7. PLEASE INSTRUCT.

BOSTER

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NNN

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